

Appl. No. 09/982,856

Amtd. Dated March 24, 2003

Reply to Office Action Dated December 23, 2002

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This amendment is in conformance with the proposed revision to 37 C.F.R.

1.121. Claims 1 and 8 have been amended. Claims 1-16 remain in this application.

In the action dated December 23, 2002, the Examiner objected to claim 8 as being indefinite under 34 USC 112 for its use of the phrase "by any suitable means". Applicant has removed the offending phrase. Applicant submits that the removal of the phrase overcomes the objection under 34 USC 112 and requests that the objection be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected to claims 1 and 4-7 under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious in light of a combination of Carlson, Sheng and Holman. The Examiner alleged that Carlson taught an organizer having holders hinged to a central part, each holder having bins. The Examiner further alleged that Sheng taught the connection of bins together by link arms for the purpose of moving the bins in unison. The Examiner further alleged that Holman taught a system of holders hinged together so that they can be positioned back to back or side-by-side. The Examiner alleged that the combination of Carlson, Shen and Holman renders the matter claimed by claims 1 and 4-7 obvious.

Applicant submits that the subject matter of amended claim 1 is not taught by any of Carlson, Shen and Holman, alone or in combination. Amended claim 1 describes the housing of the holder in the claimed organizer as having a "releasable latching mechanism for engaging the holder to secure the container unit in the holder". Applicant submits that this is fully supported by both the figures and description of the specification as filed. In the paragraph starting at page 7 line 14 of the specification as filed, Applicant describes that :

... the units (drop-bins) preferably have two tabs 51 at the bottom thereof, to insert into corresponding slots in the holder 50. The units also preferably have two springy catches 52 at the top thereof, with a lip portion which projects slightly upwardly, such that when the tabs 51 are inserted, and the unit is then rotated into the holder, the catches 52 cause the lip portions to snap into corresponding slots in the top of the holder. The units can be removed by depressing the catch slightly to disengage the lip portions from the slots.

Applicant submits that one skilled in the art will appreciate that the tabs at the bottom of the drop in bins and the corresponding slots, in combination with the springy catches, form a releasable latching mechanism. The slots and tabs co-operate with the springy catches to allow the housing to be added to and removed from the holder. Applicant submits that the teachings

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of this paragraph fully support amended claim 1. Furthermore, applicant submits that further releasable latching means are describe at page 6, line 29 which reads

Optionally, as shown in Figs. 10 and 11, each unit can be provided with a molded/detachable clip 14 that can enable clipping on a rail...

at page 7 line 3 which reads

...units can be fitted with one or more adhesive-backed magnets 16 to facilitate mounting...

and at page 7 line 6 which reads

Similarly, the units could have a Velcro™ hook or pile strip (not shown) that would allow it to be secured to a counterpart strip...

Applicant submits that amended claim 1 traverses the objection, and requests that the objection to claims 1 and 4-7 be withdrawn.

Furthermore, Applicant submits that the paragraph starting at page 7 line 14, reproduced above, fully supports the matter of new claim 14 which describes the releasable latching mechanism of claim 1 as "a set of tabs for releasably engaging a set of slots in the holder, and a catch."

New claims 15 and 16 are directed to an organizer that is sized to house a plurality of container units, where the container units optionally can be placed in a variety of positions to allow reconfiguration of the organizer. Applicant submits that the matter of claim 15 is supported by the specification as filed at page 5, line 18 which reads

The larger system could be, for example, a holder which is configured to receive one or many such drop-bins forming an organizer.

Claim 15 is further supported by the specification as filed at page 7, line 9 which reads

Larger systems can be assembled by fitting individual drop-bin units together...

Furthermore, claim 16 is supported by the specification as filed at page 9 line 25, which in describing figures 37A to 37F teaches

an embodiment of the invention, in which a number of drop-bin units 1 are attachable to a frame 53, in any of a multitude of locations...

Applicant submits that the teaching of drop-bins being attachable in any of a multitude of locations clearly indicates that the organizer of the present invention is reconfigurable by substituting one container unit for another.

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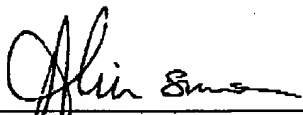
Examiner rejected to claims 1 and 8 under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious in light of a combination of Carlson, Sheng and Smilie. The Examiner alleged that in addition to the above described teachings of Carlson and Sheng, Smilie teaches a system of adjacent bins separated by a holder center wall. Applicant submits that the "releasable latching mechanism for engaging the holder to secure the container unit in the holder" of amended claim 1 is neither taught, nor suggested in any of Carlson, Sheng and Smilie, alone or in combination. As claim 8 properly depends from claim 1, Applicant submits that it too is distinguished from Carlson, Sheng and Smilie, alone or in combination. Applicant requests that the rejection of claims 1 and 8 be withdrawn.

Applicant submits that claim 1 is now in condition for allowance. As claims 4 through 8, and 14-16 all depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1, Applicant submits that they too are in condition for allowance.

Applicant submits that claim 1 as amended is generic to all identified species. Claims 2, 3, and 9-13 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1 and Applicant submits that they too are in condition for allowance and requests their reconsideration.

Applicant respectfully requests that a this application now proceed to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,
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